

Autism, identity & co-occurring conditions

Autistic people experience higher rates of diversity in sexual orientation, gender identity, and co-occurring conditions compared to the non-autistic population.

Research has consistently shown that Autistic individuals are more likely to identify as LGBTQIA+ and/or gender diverse. Additionally, many Autistic individuals live with co-occurring conditions such as intellectual disability, ADHD, and mental health challenges.



Understanding these intersections is crucial to fostering inclusivity, improving support services, and ensuring that Autistic people are recognised and respected in all aspects of their identity.

This fact sheet provides an overview of key research findings and statistics to inform and support a greater understanding of these important topics.

**Our purpose
a different brilliant®**

Understanding, engaging and celebrating the strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the autism spectrum.

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Sexual orientation

Research consistently shows that Autistic people are more likely to identify as having a sexual orientation other than heterosexual compared to non-autistic people.

- A recent large UK study found that around 40% of Autistic people identified as non-heterosexual, compared to approximately 20% of non-autistic people. (Weir et al., 2021)
- While exact figures vary across studies, the general trend suggests that Autistic individuals are more likely to be part of the LGBTQIA+ community than their non-autistic peers.



Gender identity

Autistic people are also more likely to identify as gender diverse.

- A recent systematic review concluded that there is a clear link between Autism and higher rates of gender dysphoria/gender incongruence, though prevalence estimates vary widely. (Kallitsounaki & Williams, 2022)
- In studies with small samples of both Autistic and non-Autistic adults, around 15% of Autistic adults identified as a gender other than male or female, compared to 1–5% of non-Autistic adults.
- While exact figures vary across studies, the general trend suggests that Autistic individuals are more likely to be identify as LGBTQIA+ than their non-autistic peers.



Co-occurring conditions

Many Autistic individuals experience co-occurring conditions, with prevalence rates varying by condition. Some key statistics include:

- Intellectual disability: Around 30% of Autistic people have an intellectual disability.
- ADHD: Between 25% and 40% of Autistic people also have ADHD.
- Mental health conditions: Between 70% and 80% of Autistic people experience mental health conditions, including anxiety and depression.



Understanding and support

Recognising the diversity in sexual orientation, gender identity, and co-occurring conditions among Autistic individuals is essential in creating inclusive, respectful, and supportive environments.

Based on the idea of a different brilliant®, Aspect's approach:

- Respects difference and diversity
- Builds a person's skills based on their strengths, interests, aspirations and support needs
- Develops autism-friendly environments
- Supports others to understand and embrace autism and to develop respectful supportive interactions.